

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application. The claims have been amended to improve their language.

Conclusion

Entry of the above amendments is earnestly solicited. An early and favorable first action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

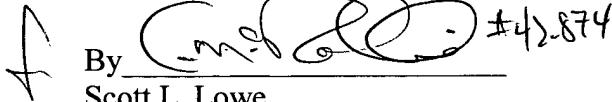
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert E. Goozner, Ph.D. (Reg. No. 42,593) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: May 31, 2006



Respectfully submitted,

By  #42,874

Scott L. Lowe

Registration No.: 41,458

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant